on the formation of the Board of Admiralty presided over by Sir Edward Carson, and arrangements made for obtaining a considerable number of guns from the War Office, from Japan, and from France, besides surrendering some guns from the secondary and anti-torpedo boat armament of our own men-of-war, principally those of the older type, pending the manufacture of large numbers of guns for the purpose. . . ."

Soon after the formation of my Ministry it was decided that the Army should be called upon to give up some of its manufacturing capacity in order to enable the Admiralty to provide some hundreds of four-inch guns and howitzers for the Navy, and as even this provision did not meet the requirements it would be advisable that the Minister of Munitions should be authorised to provide further manufacturing facilities. As the manufacture of these new guns would take time, and the need was urgent, the army agreed to hand over at once to the Admiralty a considerable number of 15 pounders and 4.7 guns.

Arrangements were approved for suspending the manufacture of 724 guns and howitzers for the Army in order to produce a larger number of four-inch guns for arming merchantmen, and the War Office, Admiralty and Ministry of Munitions

were ordered to prepare without delay a scheme for meeting the requirements of the Admiralty for guns for merchant-men by April, 1917. This decision is very signifi-cant of the fact that the War Cabinet at that date placed the maritime position first in the order of urgency.